

The Evening Star Washington D.C.

By the Associated Press

Arabs Claim Capture Of Kastel, but Jews Say Town Is Theirs

Jerusalem, April 12, 1948

The see-saw battle for Kastel reached verbal stand off today. Both Jews and Arabs claimed the hilltop fortress which commands part of the vital Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway.

British Army sources said last night that counter attacking Arabs had recaptured Kastel in an assault against the Jewish garrison there. The Arabs said today they were holding the town, but a Hagana source said Kastel still is firmly in Jewish hands.

The stronghold has changed hands almost daily for the last 10 days. Hagana, the Jewish militia. and re-entered the town Saturday night. Eventually the side which holds the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway probably will determine whether the 10,000 Jews in Jerusalem remain conquered. Food convoys to the holy City PASS over the highway before Kastel.

The Arabs deny claims broadcast by Hagana last night that the Arab village of Kalonia in the same area was destroyed after a sharp

encounter with an Arab band. Hagana said the Arabs used Kalonia houses for observation posts for attacks on Jewish traffic and positions in the Kastel area.

Hagana said one British and one Iraqi officer had been killed as well as most of the Arab fighters quartered in Kalonia.

After a sharp mortar and machine gun duel with Arabs in Kamatof south of Jerusalem at dawn today, Hagana forces advanced and occupied several houses used by Arabs, Jewish sources said.

Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern Gang-Jewish extremist groups- still hold the strategic village of Deir Yassin, which they took Friday. Deir Yassin is near Kastel.

"Horrible Massacre" Charged.

Both Arabs and Jews describe the extremist attack on the village as "a horrible massacre."

A Red Cross investigation showed many women and children were among the 254 Arab dead there.

The Arab Higher Committee asked Moslems and Christian everywhere to "consider the facts of the massacre of innocent people by Jews at Deir Yassin and to decide the world's reaction to it."

The committee's general secretary. Dr. Hussein el Khalidi, said:

"Deir Yassin, where this outrage occurred,- is practically the only (Arab) village in the Jerusalem area which had not yet appealed to any Arab authority as being in danger of Jews. In the early morning Friday they (the Jews) swooped in and practically exterminated women, children and old men. The only ones who managed to escape were the young men. After that massacre in which some 250 were killed by guns and grenades the remaining 150 women and children were dumped into trucks, paraded through Jewish areas, spat on and stoned."

A Jewish Agency spokesman said "Hagana members in Jerusalem rescued a number of the Arab women and children and turned them over to the British. The spokesman said the Agency had cabled Trans-Jordan's King Abdullah the text of its statement repudiating the Irgun-Stern massacre. He also released a statement by the Chief Rabbinate, describing the killings as a "foul crime."

The statement called on Irgun and the Stern Gang to "realize the depth

of the shame you have inflicted on Jewry, to whom such acts are utter abominations." In a government hospital here, 12-year-old Fahimeh Ali Moustafa Zeidan, who suffered a grenade wound in the Deir Yassin attack, told her story of what happened in the village. She lost her mother, her grandmother, her grandfather, two brothers and a baby sister, 3 months old.

Baby's Cry Betrayed Family

"The whole village was asleep." she said. "About 500 Jews with heavy guns and tanks started attacking. Our 30 or 40 guards tried to stop them, but it was useless."

Source: <https://bit.ly/3yMEt68>)